

SUN LAKES SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION
2014 MEN'S RULES
Effective February 10, 2016
(Changes are in red type)

I. MISSION OF THE SUN LAKES SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION:

1. The mission of the Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association (SLSSA) is to promote slow pitch softball as a sport for recreation and competition in the Sun Lakes community area.

II. PERSONAL LIABILITY:

2. The SLSS does not provide medical liability insurance for its members. It is the responsibility of each player to obtain his own medical insurance coverage.

III. DRESS CODE:

3. The SLSSA has sponsors that pay fees for advertising on uniform shirts. These team shirts must be worn for each game as the outer garment. Metal spikes are prohibited. Rubber spikes are permitted. Team managers are responsible for their players following the Dress Code. All players must present a good appearance at all times. Any perceived intentional and persistent Dress Code violations shall be referred to the Board of Directors for possible disciplinary action.

IV. SS-USA RULES:

4. SS-USA rules shall govern play except for specific rules differences included herein. In the case of any conflict or difference in specific rules, the rules of the SLSSA shall prevail.

V. THE PLAYING FIELD:

- A. Thirty-foot Commitment Line: A line will be drawn in foul territory perpendicular to the third base line, 30 feet from home plate. A runner from third base who touches or crosses this line must continue to the runner's home plate or home safety line and cannot return to third base. If the runner returns to third base, he shall be called out. A runner cannot be tagged out after crossing the 30-foot commitment line. He must be forced out by the defensive player in possession of the ball while touching the pitcher's home plate or the strike zone mat prior to the runner touching the runner's home plate.
- B. Runner's Home Plate or Safety Line: A runner's home plate, 70 feet from third base and eight feet from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base shall be used by the runner when attempting to score. If a runner touches the pitcher's home plate or strike zone mat when attempting to score, and a proper appeal is made by the defensive team, the runner shall be called out if the umpire is in agreement with such appeal.
- C. First Base Double Bag: A double bag with two side by side 15" square sections shall be used at first base. The fielder's portion of the bag shall be white in color and shall be in fair territory. The runner's portion of the bag shall be orange in color and shall be in foul territory. A batter/runner must use the orange bag on any first play at first base. If the runner touches

the white bag instead of the orange bag, he shall be called out, except, in the umpire's judgment, the batter-runner is avoiding a collision. This is NOT an appeal play. Defensive players must use only the white bag. Touching the orange bag will not result in an out. Batter/runners may use the white bag when they are not being played on.

VI. PITCHING RULES:

- A. Pitcher's Rubber: A pitcher's rubber, 50 feet from home plate, shall be the legal pitching area. Any pitch made outside of this area shall be declared an illegal pitch and shall count as a ball.
- B. Pitching: Prior to beginning the pitching motion, the pitcher must come to a complete stop with the ball in front of this body. The pitcher must have at least one foot on the pitching rubber when starting the pitching motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the pitch may be made in any direction with the free foot. The pitcher's foot must remain on the rubber until the ball is released from his hand. The pitcher must be facing the batter with the ball in front of his body when releasing the pitch. The pitcher must release the ball within ten seconds after the batter is set in the batter's box. The catcher must remain in the catcher's box until the pitch is batted, touches the ground, home plate or the strike zone mat, or reaches the catcher's box. Any violation of these rules shall result in an illegal pitch and shall count as a ball. Pitchers are encouraged to use a protective mask and/or shin guards when pitching.
- C. Safety Screen: Effective January 15, 2013, a safety screen shall be placed in front of the pitcher and shall remain in place for all batting practice and games, including both league play and recreational program games. (Exceptions: Ladies team practice and games and non-league tournaments.) The screen shall be placed 11 feet 6 inches from the front edge of the pitcher's rubber and centered directly in front of the pitcher's rubber. The pitcher shall stand behind the screen and, from the pitcher's rubber, deliver the pitched ball. A pitched ball that strikes the screen shall be called a ball. If a batted ball hits any part of the screen, a foul ball shall be called on the batter. The result of such a foul ball will be determined by the count rule in effect at that time. A ball thrown by any fielder that strikes the screen remains in play.

VII. HOME PLATE AND STRIKE ZONE MAT:

- A. The strike zone mat used in SLSSA league play shall be 19 inches wide and 34 ½ inches long.

VIII. PRE-GAME RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Ground Rules. Prior to the game, both managers and the umpire will discuss ground rules.
- B. Scorekeeper and Scoreboard Operator. A scorekeeper and scoreboard operator will be assigned to each game. The managers will provide their line-ups to the scorekeeper ten minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game.

IX. GAME RULES:

- A. Number of Innings: All games shall be scheduled for seven innings. The Double Inning Procedure shall be used. Teams shall alternate batting in two-inning increments until the

seventh inning when each team bats once with the home team batting only if they are behind or tied. If the home team is behind by 8 or more runs and not over the mercy rule ending the game, then the “flip flop” rule will be utilized and the home team will bat in the top of the seventh inning. If the home team scores enough runs to be ahead of the visiting team, including the half-of-a run awarded to each visiting team in each game, then the visiting will bat in the bottom of the seventh inning.

- B. Infield Practice: Infield practice may occur before innings in which teams change sides. The infield ball must be returned to the dugout as soon as the umpire signals “ready for play.”
- C. Completed Game: A completed game shall be seven innings (or six and one-half innings if the home team is ahead at the end of the visitor’s seventh inning). A game called by the umpire on account of darkness or inclement weather shall be a completed game if five innings (four and one-half if the home team is ahead) have been played. Games stopped prior to five innings (or four and one-half) shall be replayed in their entirety. No statistics shall count for such incomplete games.
- D. Suspended Games: A game stopped by the umpire after five innings with the score tied, shall be completed at a later date from the point of suspension. If the game is suspended after the completion of seven innings with the score tied, the tie breaker procedure described below will be used when the game is resumed.
- E. Five Run Rule: When a team scores five runs in its half inning, their turn at bat shall end. The Five Run Rule does not apply in the seventh or subsequent innings.
- F. Mercy Rule: If one team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs at the end of the sixth or any subsequent inning, the game shall be ended at that point.
- G. Half Run Rule- The visiting team will start each game with a half-of-a run to its favor.

X. DRAFTING OF TEAM ROSTERS: Managers will draft their league teams in the following manner:

- A. The order of the draft will be determined by a random drawing of the managers’ names from a hat. The names will be drawn by a non-manager present for the draft, and, the order cannot be changed.
- B. The draft will be a serpentine draft.
- C. Managers must draft themselves based on the following:

 1. All number 1 rated managers must draft themselves in the first round.
 2. All number 2 rated managers must draft themselves by the third round.
 3. All number 3 rated managers must draft themselves by the seventh round.
 4. All number 4 rated managers must draft themselves by the eleventh round.

XI. PLAYER RULES:

- A. Player Ratings: There will be a rating system of 1 through 4 with 1 being the highest rated level.

B. Number of Players & Use of Substitute Players: A full complement of defensive players shall be 11 players. Each team will have a total of thirteen players on its roster unless the Board approves a higher or lower number. If a team has six or more of its own players, the team may borrow the number of substitutes required to bring the total to eleven players. A team may play with as few as nine players as long as at least six of the players are on that team's roster. If a team has less than six of its own players or less than nine total players (including substitutes), the team must forfeit its games.

- i. Team managers are responsible and urged to use their best efforts in finding their own substitute players when it is known they will not have a full complement of 13 of their own team players or the amount established by the Board. The Managers may select any player rated equal to or below for each missing player. In addition, any players on the substitutes' waiting list who are rated equal to or below may be used as substitutes for a player. If the manager knows in advance of the game day that substitutes will be required, the substitutes must be sought from the substitutes' waiting list or bye teams. If all players on the waiting list and bye teams have been contacted and substitutes are not available, then substitutes from other teams playing that day may be used. In the event that a substitute is needed on the game day due to a "no show without prior notice" then a player or players rated equal to or below the missing players may be selected from one of the other teams playing that day. With the agreement of the opposing manager, it is permissible to borrow a player from the opposing team if that team has more than 11 players available for the game. The same rules as outlined above shall be used in selecting substitute players from the opposing team. If appropriate substitutes as defined herein cannot be found, a team must forfeit its games if it would have less than nine total players. Substitute players may bat in any spot in the batting order and may play any position.
5. A player on a team's roster may be inserted in the lineup at any time; however, he will bat at the end of the batting order if the game has already started. However, if a substitute player starts a game and a roster player shows up later, the substitute and only the substitute shall have the option to stay in the game until it is completed. **If the substitute opts to leave the game, the roster player will enter the game and bat in the same position in the batting order as the substitute was batting.**
 6. A substitute player must be available to bat in his assigned batting position in the lineup. If a substitute arrives after his assigned position in the batting order has passed, he may enter the game but must bat last in the order.
 7. **New and Returning Players:** All new players must be evaluated and assigned a player rating by the Player Ratings Committee before being added to the substitute list or league team. Those returning to the area after a sign-up deadline, to be established by the Board, will be assigned to the Substitutes List until a vacancy occurs on a league team. New and returning players must register and pay dues prior to participating in any games.
 8. A new player is defined to also include prior members who have not been members for the past year or longer.

C. Defensive Players: Free substitution is permitted. Defensive players may leave the game and return later in the same or different defensive positions. All players present for a scheduled doubleheader must play a minimum of six defensive innings. The six innings may be played

all in one game or may be spread over the two games. (The minimum number of defensive innings is six instead of seven in order to cover situations where the home team does not bat in the bottom of the seventh inning.)

D. Injured Players: A player injured during the course of a game and unable to continue play will not be declared out when it is his turn at bat. Instead, the other players in the line up shall move up a position in the batting order. If a player declares himself injured prior to the start of a game, he may not enter that game at a later time.

9. If the injured player leaves the game a substitute player may be inserted into the line-up. Normal substitution rules as stated in Section XI (B) i above shall be followed in selecting the substitute. The substitute will be inserted in the place of the injured player in the batting order.

10. If the injured player leaves the game and the team then has less than nine players to continue play and no qualified substitute is available, the game may continue at the option of the short-handed team; however, a second game, if applicable, would be forfeited if a substitute cannot be found as described in Section X (A) above and the team then has less than nine players to start the second game. If the short-handed team elects to forfeit the game, all batting statistics up until the point of the forfeiture shall be counted.

11. Players Leaving the Game Early: If a player leaves a game early for personal reasons, the other players will move up one position in the batting order and no out will be recorded for the missing player. A player cannot leave a game and then re-enter if he has missed his turn at bat.

E. If a team has less than nine players remaining after a player leaves prior to the conclusion of a game, the game may continue at the option of the short-handed team; however, a second game, if applicable, would be forfeited if a substitute cannot be found as described in Section XI (A) above and the team then has less than nine players to start the second game. If the short-handed team elects to forfeit the game, batting statistics up to the point of the forfeiture will be counted.

XII. EQUIPMENT

A. Fielding Gloves and Mitts. The Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association has adopted the rules as contained in the Senior Softball-USA Rule Book relating to the definition and use of glove and mitts. This specifically includes Section 3.6 found on page 18 of the 2015-16 Rule Book. The improper use of a mitt can be cited by the umpire without an appeal from the opposing team or can be as a result of an appeal by the opposing team.

B. Official Bats. The Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association has adopted the rules as contained in the Senior Softball-USA Rule Book relating to the definition of legal and illegal bats. This specifically includes Sections 3.4, 3.4.2, 3.4(3), 3.4(4) and 3.4(5) found on pages 13-16 of the 2015-16 Rule Book. The improper use of an illegal bat or cracked bat can be cited by the umpire without an appeal by the opposing team or also can be as a result of an appeal by the opposing team.

XIII. BATTING

A. Number of Batters. All team members reporting to a game shall be in the batting order unless a player notifies the manager that he is unable to play due to a previous injury or illness. In such case, the player may act as a coach and not play. Any players arriving after the game has started shall be added after the last batter in the original batting order. (See Section X (A) for situations involving substitute players and late-arriving roster players.)

- B. One and One Count. The one and one count rule with ONE to waste shall be utilized in league play. This means that the count shall be one ball and one strike when a batter enters the batters box. If he then hits a foul ball on the third strike, he will not be called out; however, if he then hits another foul ball he is out.
- C. Intentional Walks. An intentional walk shall be accomplished by advising the umpire of the pitcher's intent to walk the batter. There are no limitations or restrictions regarding intentional walks.
- D. Bunting. Bunting is prohibited. If a batter bunts a ball into fair territory, he shall be declared out and all runners will return to their original bases.
- E. Definition of a Strike. Any legal pitch hitting home plate or the mat behind home plate is a strike. The strike zone mat shall be 19 inches wide and 26 inches long and shall have a V-shaped notch that conforms to the backside of home plate. Alternatively, the strike zone mat may cover home plate in its entirety, in which case the mat shall be 19 inches wide and 34 ½ inches long. Balls and strikes are judgment calls by the umpire and cannot be appealed.
- F. Foul ball rule clarifications: (1) a fly ball caught in foul territory with less than two outs and with runner(s) on base is not a dead ball. The ball remains alive and runners may tag up and attempt to advance at their own risk; (2) a foul tip is not a foul ball unless the ball rises to a height above the batter's head. Therefore, a foul tip caught by the catcher is not an out unless it is a third strike situation.
- G. Home Runs. A batter will be credited with a home run when a fair ball is hit over the outfield fence. A team may hit no more than 3 home runs in a game. Any home run over the total of three will be scored as an out and runners will not advance. An inside-the-park home run shall not count against the permitted 3 home runs. When a ball is hit over the fence for a home run, the batter must, at a minimum, touch first base. Any runners on base shall return immediately to their dugout.
- H. Batting Statistics. The Modified on Base Percentage (MOBP) shall be used in calculating batting statistics. The MOBP is calculated as the ratio of all times reaching base on hits, walks and by fielding errors (the numerator) divided by total plate appearances excluding sacrifice flies (the denominator). Note that reaching base via a fielder's choice is a plate appearance but is NOT included in the numerator. In other words, reaching base via a fielder's choice is equivalent to making an out.
- I. Batting Out of Order.
1. Scorers should notify the umpire if a batter is about to bat out of order. The umpire should then order the correct batter to bat. No penalty applies.
 2. Scorers should notify the umpire if a batter already at bat is batting out of order. In this instance, the correct batter will take the place of the incorrect batter and assume the ball and strike count, if any. No penalty applies.
 3. Scorers should notify the umpire if a batter reaches base and was the incorrect batter. In this instance, the umpire will call that batter out and all base runners, if any, will return to their previous bases and the correct batter will then bat. The notification must occur before a pitch is thrown to the subsequent batter. The correct batter will then bat. If a pitch has already been made, then the

result of the play shall stand and the next proper batter shall bat. If the proper batter is on base, the batter following him in the batting order shall bat.

XIV. BASE RUNNING RULES:

- A. Substitute Runners. A team may use unlimited substitute runners during the game. However, an individual player may be a substitute runner only once during the game. Scorers should advise the umpire if a substitute runner is substituted more than once. In this case, the second substitute runner shall be declared out as soon as he touches a base. Exception: A substitute runner can only be used a second time in the game for an injured runner if the manager has already use all of his roster as substitute runners. If a substitute runner is still on base when his regular batting position comes up, the substitute runner shall be called out and removed from the base. If there are less than three outs, he shall then take his turn at bat.
- B. Leaving Base. Base runners may not leave their bases until the batter makes contact with the ball or it touches the ground before reaching home plate. Any runner leaving his base early shall be called out by the umpire. No appeal is required. Runners will not be called out if a batter swings and misses.
- C. Sliding. Sliding is permitted at second and third bases only. Sliding is prohibited at first base, home plate and the home safety line. The runner shall be called out if he slides or dives into first base, home plate or the home safety line. If a runner overruns second or third base, he is subject to being put out by tagging. After reaching base, a player may dive or slide back into first, second or third base in an attempt to avoid a tag or force out.

XV. APPEAL PLAYS:

12. All appeal plays are governed by the playing rules and as such must be made before the next pitch or before all fielders have crossed the foul line on their way back to the dugout after a third out.

XVI. GENERAL RULES:

- A. Changes to the Playing Rules. Changes to these Playing Rules require approval of the Board of Directors. No team manager, player or umpire can arbitrarily change the rules included herein for league games.
- B. Protests. A protest must be based upon a misinterpretation or misapplication of the rules and not upon the umpire's judgment. Only the manager may discuss a questionable play with the umpire. A protest must be settled with the umpire prior to the resumption of play. If a protest is to be made, the scorekeeper will note in the scorebook the point at which play is protested. The protest must be filed in writing and presented to a member of the Board of Directors within 48 hours of the time of the protest.
- C. Player Conduct. The Board shall establish rules to govern the conduct of its membership. The Board will recruit three members to serve on a Grievance Committee. The responsibility of the committee will be to investigate written complaints from its membership, to interview all appropriate parties and to make its recommendation to the Board as to the validity of the complaint. During the investigation process the accused will be granted the opportunity to defend himself and to confront his accuser. It is incumbent upon the Grievance Committee to act upon complaints in a timely manner while memories of the event are fresh. The Board will review the Grievance Committee's recommendation and take whatever action it deems

appropriate according to the League's conduct rules. All parties involved will be informed of the decision. No sitting member of the Board will be eligible to serve on the Grievance Committee. The names of the Grievance Committee will be posted on the bulletin board of the Field of Dreams and on the SLSSA website.

- D. Misconduct. Misconduct is any act by a manager, coach or player that brings discredit to the league. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, smoking on the playing field or in the dugouts, the use of foul language and/or obscene gestures and excessive arguing with the umpire. In addition, any player committing an intentional act which either jeopardizes his team's chances of success or otherwise diminishes the quality of play by his actions may be subject to sanctions. The umpire has full discretion in determining what acts constitute misconduct. The penalty for misconduct is ejection from the game. An ejected player must leave the Field of Dreams premises, which includes the playing field, clubhouse and parking lot. If the ejection occurs during the first game of a doubleheader, the ejection also applies to the second game.
- E. Gross Misconduct. Gross misconduct includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, striking, fighting, dangerous and violent play, and excessive foul language. The umpire has full discretion in determining what acts constitute gross misconduct. The penalty for gross misconduct is ejection from the game. In addition, the player may be suspended from league play for future league play dates. Ejected parties must leave the Field of Dreams premises as described in Article XIV (D) above. In the case of severe gross misconduct, the umpire, at his discretion, may forfeit the game. The names of ejected players shall be provided by the umpire to the Board of Directors. The Board will review each situation and may take any additional disciplinary action it deems appropriate. Players have the right to appeal suspensions by stating their case in writing to the Grievance Committee.
- F. "No Shows" during League Play. If a player is a "No Show" without notifying his manager two times within a single fiscal year (October through September), that player will be suspended from League Play for all remaining games during that fiscal year. The player may reapply the following fiscal year, but shall be treated as a new player and be assigned to the recreational program pending availability of a team roster spot. Team managers shall document all "No Shows" as they occur and advise the Board in writing or via email of such occurrences.
- G. THESE PLAYING RULES INCORPORATE ALL RULE CHANGES APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS on February 10, 2016.